

#1

\$1.25

QUACK!



"DUCKANEER"



"KOSMO KAT"



"DUCKULA"



"YOU-ALL GIBBON"



BLAH BLAH, QUACK QUACK

a funny-animal editorial by
FRANK BRUNNER

Some of you might say, "why?...why funny animals?" "Why QUACK?" Well, I could hand you some witticisms about the time being right and readers ready for a resurgence of this genre, but rather than sounding like some burnt-out N.Y. comics hack, I'll simply say: I want to do this. I like doing it.

QUACK created itself in an atmosphere of spontaneity surrounding my poster "The Duckaneer", which sparked the imagination of our publisher Mike to present the comic which you now hold. The title was a flash in the mind of Jan, my wife. And the many creative people who contributed their ideas and work to this first issue of QUACK saw, too, an opportunity to do what they like to do. This is something the East Coast publishers do not seem to grasp. After all, it's not supposed to be fun, it's work. I mean, comics are serious business, right? Well, despite the long, laborious hours, to me comics are fun. Otherwise, why would we stay in this crazy racket? I like to have fun and I think you do too. Actually, QUACK comes as a direct result of the "big" publishers ignoring a pool of talent and ideas simply because of geography and their preconceived-formula methods; yes, a reaction on our part in one way, but more an advance market on the road to a new and more open-minded way of thinking about comics.

If you think that comic books are fun and you enjoy what we're trying to do here, give us the kind of support you give the "establishment" comics and we'll continue giving you our alternative--QUACK!

So just thanks,

Frank

Oakland, CA
May, 1976

7 June 1976
N.Y., NY: in transit

Okay, people, these are Frank's personal beliefs and not necessarily my own or the other people's in this book. While I agree with many of his expressed sentiments, I'm not personally so negative these days about "big publishers" and the "East Coast" mentality. They have their ways, we at Star*Reach have ours--and that includes such N.Y.-based talents as Alan Kupperberg and Howie Chaykin.

Still, I'd like to reaffirm that a major motivation for all of us on this book has been fun - our own and hopefully yours as well.

We well and enjoy letters. Write us. We even answer upon occasion.

Mike Friedrich

For her creation of the title "Quack," her expert cover-coloring assistance, but more for her many ideas and intense spiritual support, we want to publicly thank



Jan Brunner

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ANY SIMILARITY TO REAL PERSONS, LIVING OR DEAD, OR REAL ANIMALS, EXCEPT FOR PURPOSES OF SATIRE, IS COINCIDENTAL.

QUACKERSVILLE,
3 A.M.: A TIME
WHEN MOST
DECENT DUCKS
ARE ASLEEP.

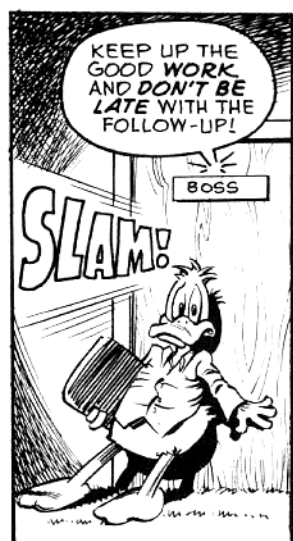
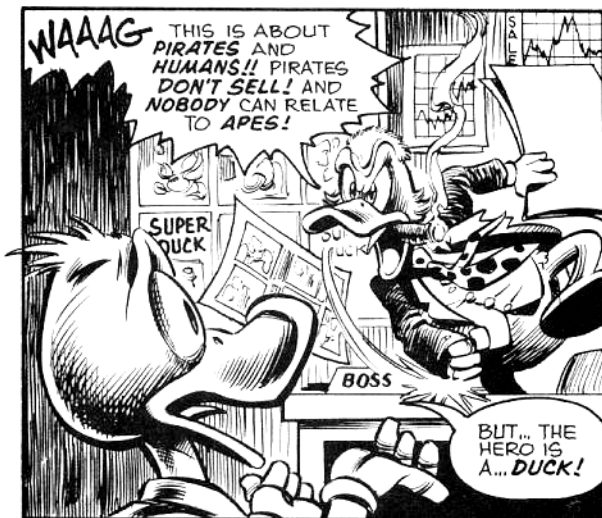
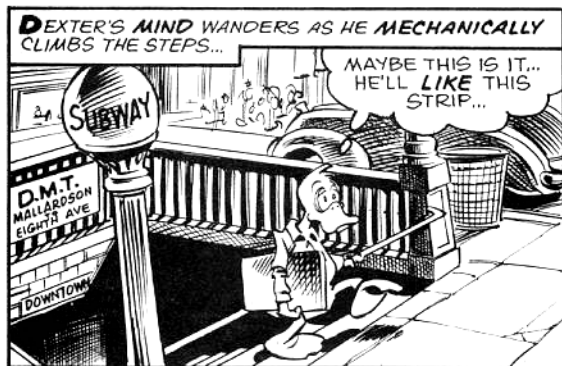
HOWEVER, THIS
STORY IS NOT
ABOUT THEM. THIS
IS A TALE OF
A WEIRDO...

A NONCONFORMIST...
A NIGHT TRIPPER
DOWN THE STREETS
OF FANTASY... A
COMIC ARTIST!

... EVEN NOW AS DAWN
AND IMPENDING DEADLINE
APPROACH, THIS ONE
IS LABORING TO
MAKE IT REAL!



WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY
FRANK BRUNNER
EMBELLISHED BY STEVE LEIALOHA
LETTERED BY TOM ORZECZOWSKI



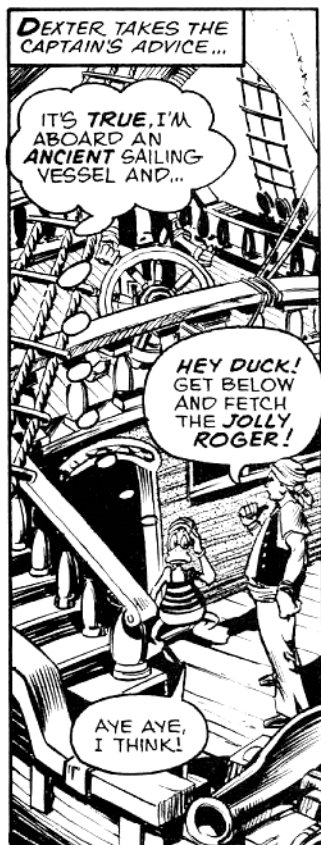
... JUST GET THAT KEY IN THE LOCK AND YOU'RE SAFE... EXCEPT THAT...

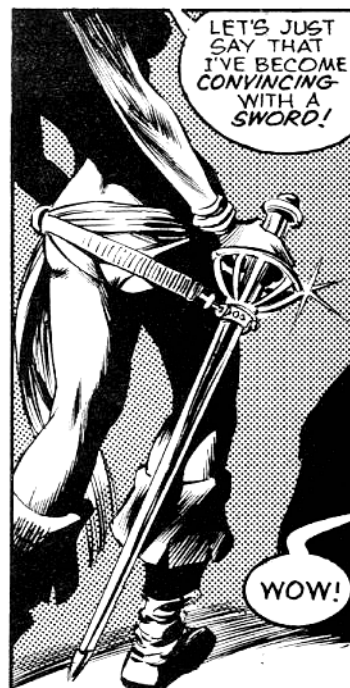




BACK... BACK DEXTER'S MIND DRIFTS IN TIME, BACK BEFORE DUCKS RULED THE WORLD... TO THAT HALF-MYTHICAL TIME WHEN HUMANS REIGNED SUPREME AND PIRATES RULED THE WAVES!









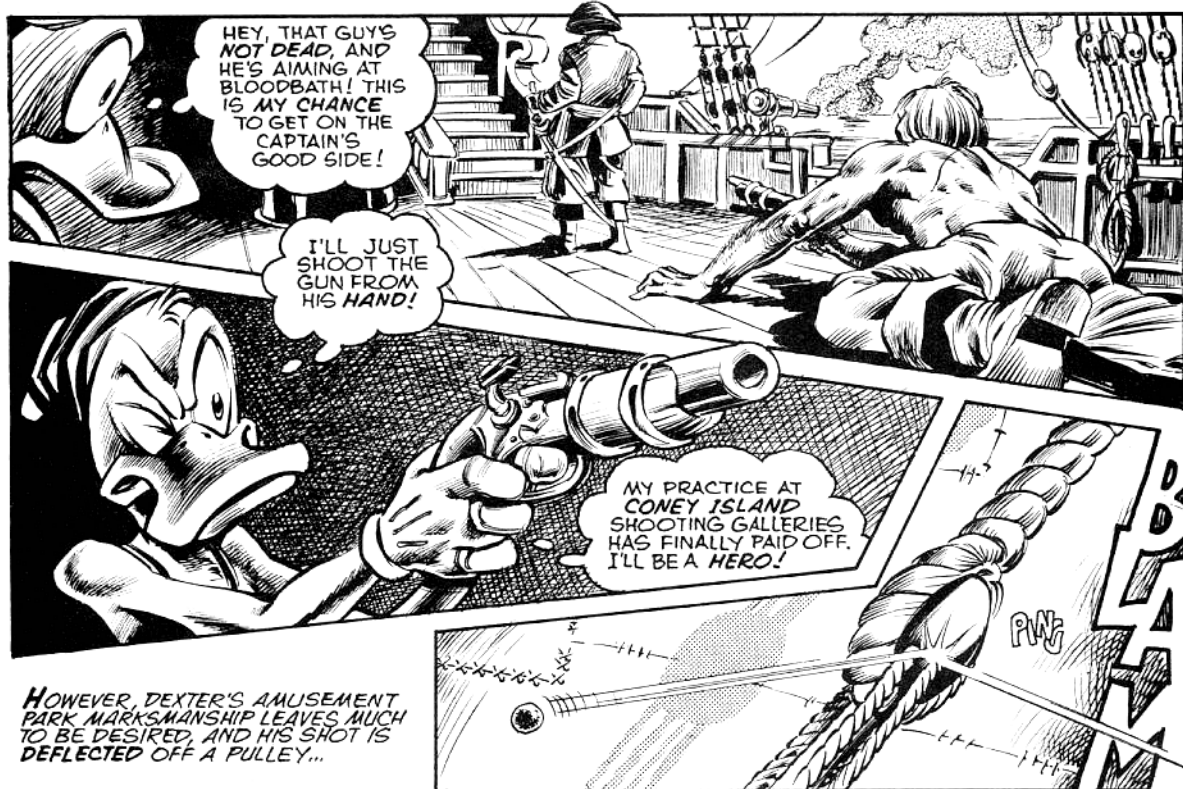
AMIDST BELCHING CANNON SMOKE, GRAPPLING HOOKS FLY! AND WITH DIRKS IN HAND AND PISTOLS PRIMED, THE RIVAL CREWS BEGIN THE DEADLY CONTEST! FIGHTING IS BITTER WITH NO QUARTER ASKED AND NONE GIVEN!



MEANWHILE, DEXTER IS LAYING LOW...

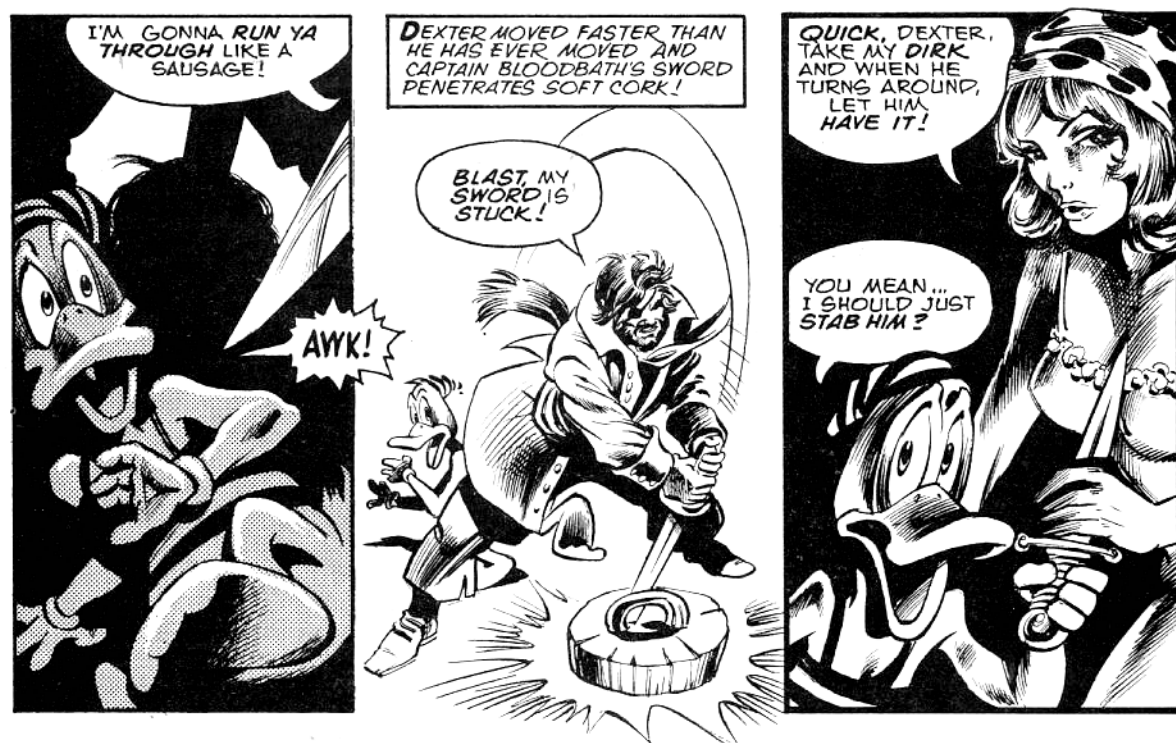
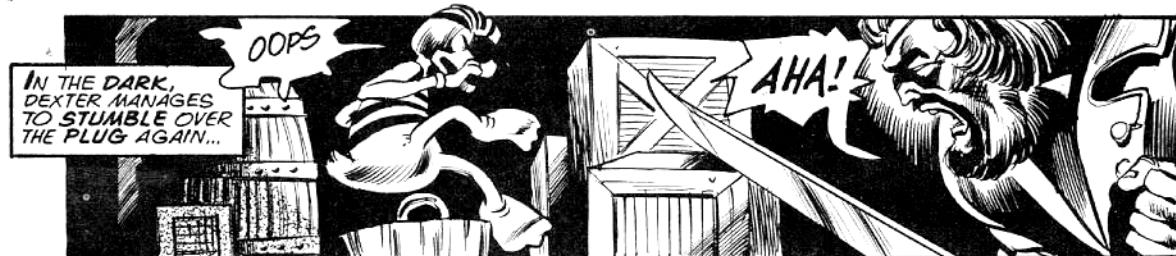




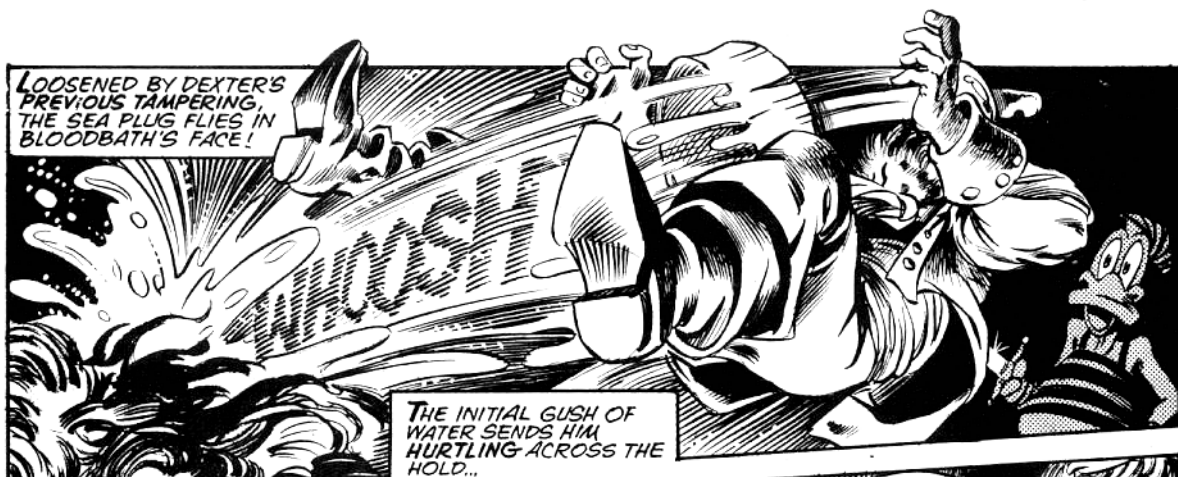


HOWEVER, DEXTER'S AMUSEMENT PARK MARKSMANSHIP LEAVES MUCH TO BE DESIRED, AND HIS SHOT IS DEFLECTED OFF A PULLEY...





LOOSENEED BY DEXTER'S
PREVIOUS TAMPERING,
THE SEA PLUG FLIES IN
BLOODBATH'S FACE!



THE INITIAL GUSH OF
WATER SENDS HIM
HURLING ACROSS THE
HOLD...



...AND
SMACK
ONTO
DEXTER'S
TREMBLING
BLADE!



I DIDN'T
MEAN
TO DO IT!

NONSENSE! YOU
DEFEATED HIM.
FAIR AND SQUARE!

BLOODBATH STAGGERS
A MOMENT IN TOTAL
DISBELIEF OF WHAT HAS
HAPPENED, THEN
COLLAPSES, DEAD.

KITTY AND
DEXTER MANAGE TO RE-PLUG
THE SHIP AND COME ON DECK,
WHERE THE CREW IS WELL INTO
THEIR VICTORY CELEBRATION...



HEY, MATES!
BLOODBATH IS
DEAD! MEET THE
NEW CAPTAIN...
DEXTER!

HIP HIP
HOORAY!



GEE, AM I
REALLY THE
CAPTAIN
NOW?

YOU'VE
GOT THE
CAPTAIN'S
HAT, IF
THAT MEANS
ANYTHING!

WHERE
ARE YOU
TAKING
ME?

TO THE CAPTAIN'S...er
YOUR CABIN, SIR! YOU MUST
BE TIRED, I KNOW I AM!

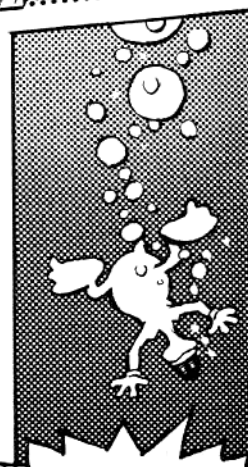
AND SO AMID DRUNKEN
REVELRY, A LONG AND
STRANGE DAY ENDS. DEXTER
AND HIS MATE RETIRE.



BY MORNING, THE CREW HAS DRIED OUT AND CAPTAIN DEXTER ADDRESSES THEM ...



SHORTLY...

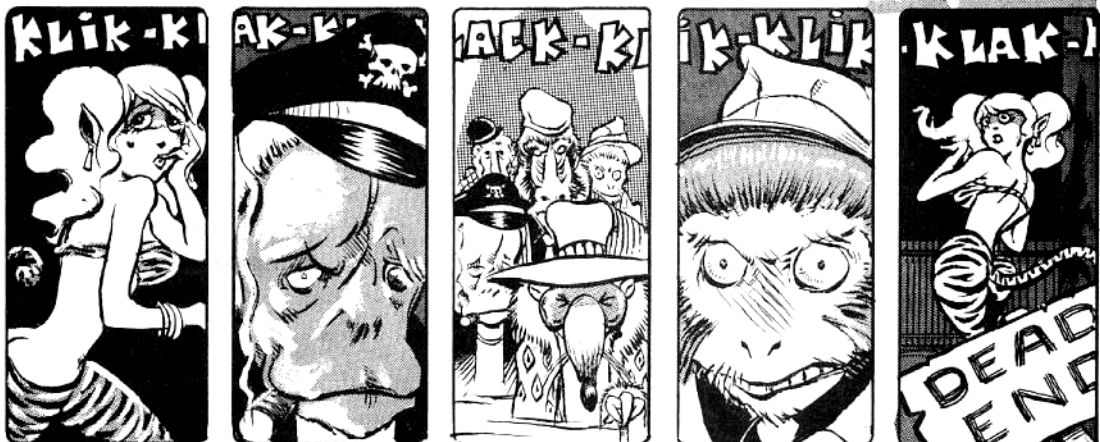
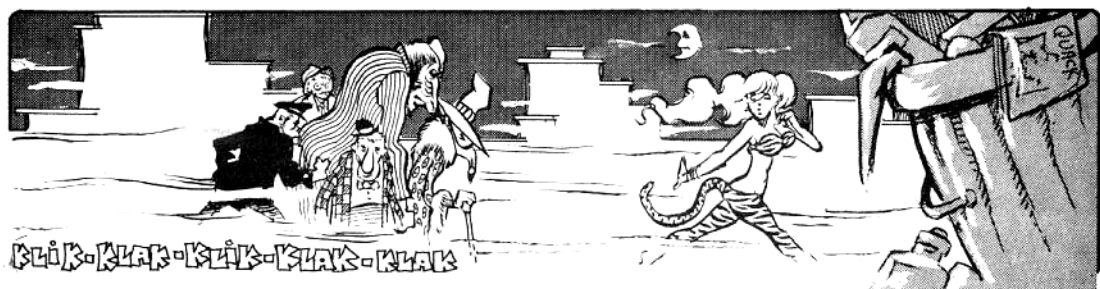
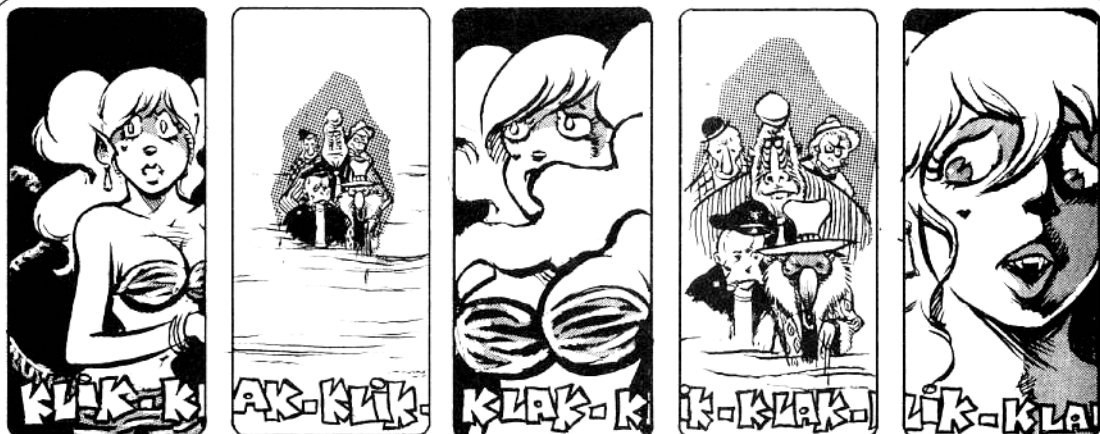


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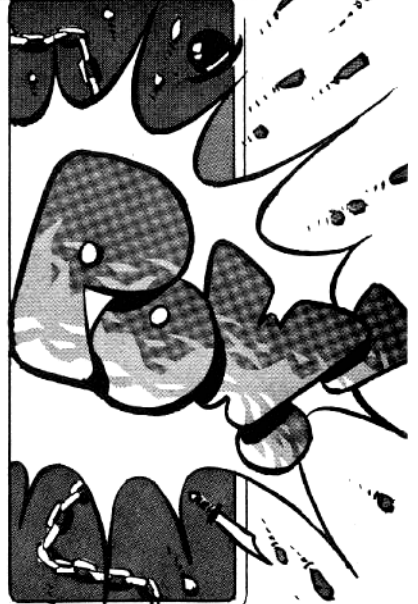
WHEN HOPE IS GONE,
DESPAIR SUBMERGING FAITH -
LOOK TO THE SHADOWS
AND REJOICE!
FOR THERE YOU'LL FIND...

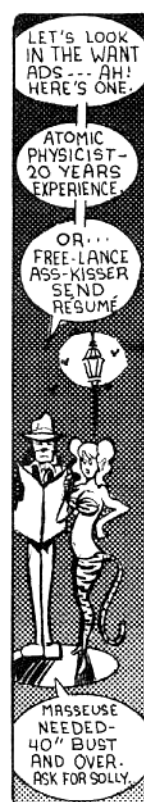
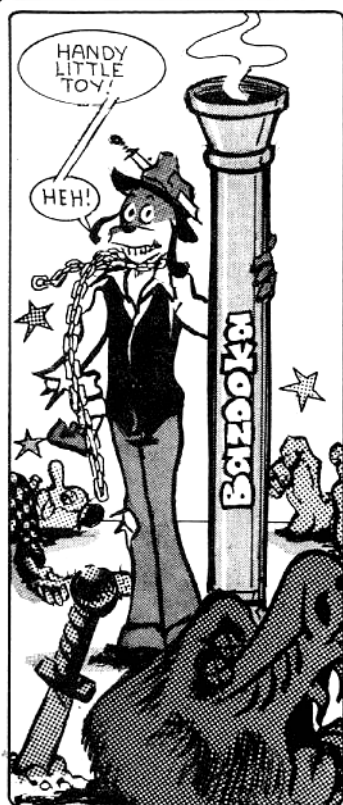


TWILIGHT IN SLUM CITY.
A LONELY NIGHT, DISTURBED ONLY BY THE RHYTHMIC PATTERN OF FEET ON PAVEMENT.
THE SOUND OF FEAR!

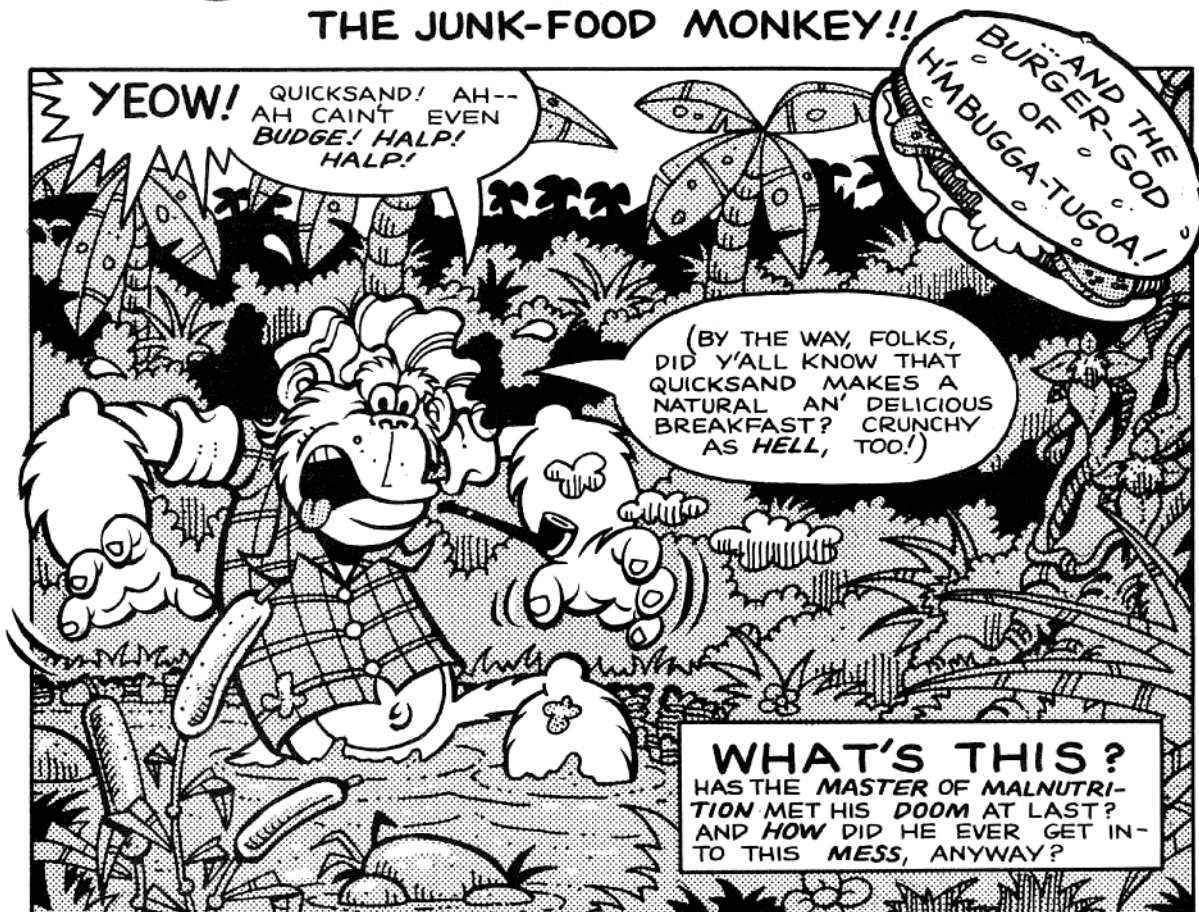








THE INEDIBLE EXPLOITS OF
YOU-ALL GIBBON
 THE JUNK-FOOD MONKEY!!



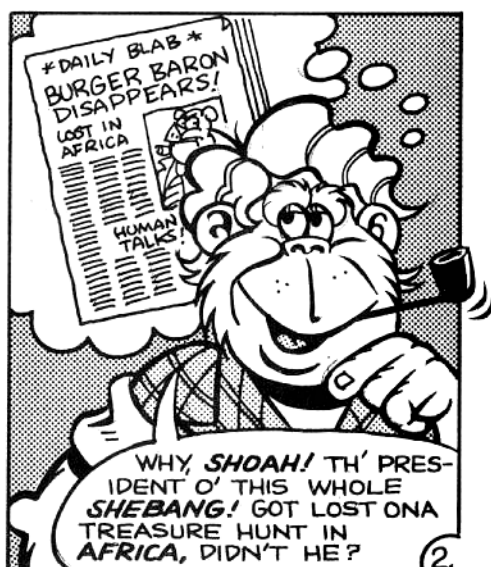
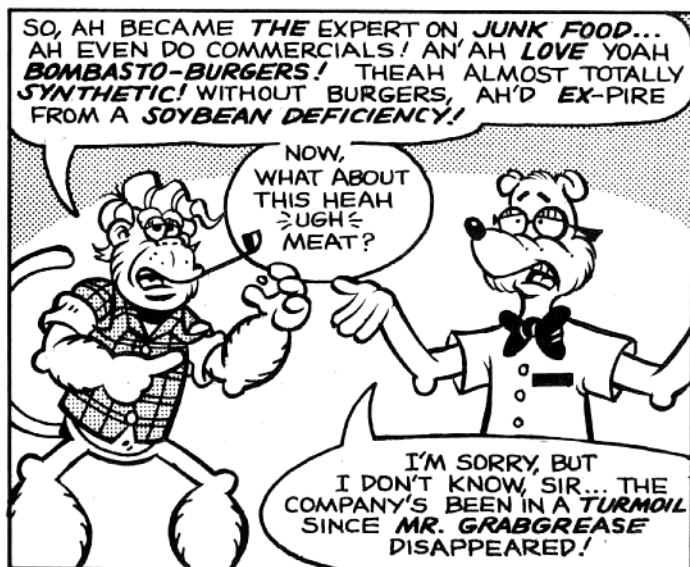
IT ALL BEGAN AT ONE OF THE NUMEROUS **MACK'S BIG-BOY-IN-THE-BOX** DRIVE-IN HAMBURGER RESTAURANTS...

...WHERE THE NOTORIOUS FAST-FOOD FANCIER, **YOU-ALL GIBBON**, IS ABOUT TO ENJOY HIS FAVORITE TREAT...





"AH WAS A **HEALTHY** LI'L GUY... 'TIL AH FOUND
 OUT THET'S ALL AH COULD EAT... AH HAD
TURNED ALLERGIC TO REAL FOOD!"

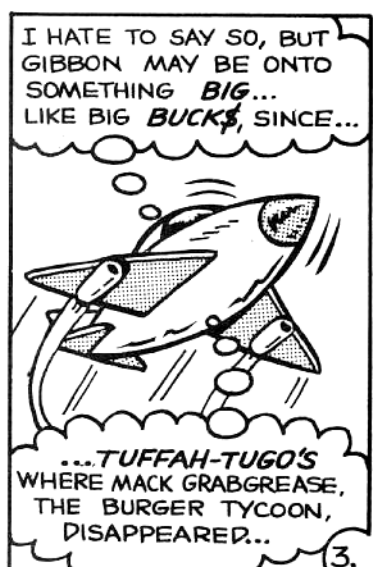
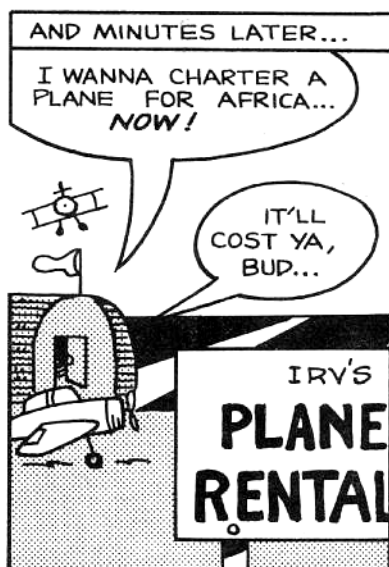
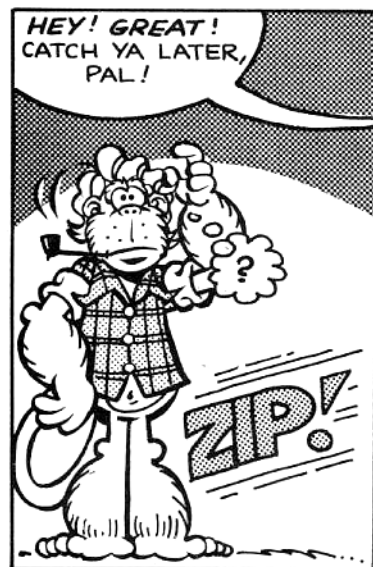




ENTER **GRAHAM CRACKERS**, TV'S GALLOPIN' GOURMET...



...WHO RECENTLY LOST A JUICY TV COMMERCIAL CONTRACT TO A NEW FOOD-FANCIER OF FAME...



TUFFAH-TUGO,
ONE WEEK LATER...

I'M **SORRY**, BWANA GIBBON,
BUT **ANOTHER** AMERICAN
SHOWED UP LAST WEEK
AND TOOK OUR ONLY
GUIDE WITH HIM!

...AN' THEY HAVEN'T
RETURNED! SOME-
THING SMELLS **ROTTEN**
-- AN' IT AIN'T
MAH **BREATH!**

BUT **BWANA!** PLEASE...
WAIT! FOUR PEOPLE
HAVE **ALREADY VANISHED**
OUT THERE!

FOUR, EH?
AH'M ON THE
RIGHT TRACK! AN
AH BET ONE OF
'EM'S THET RASCAL
CRACKUHS!

AND SO, THE
INSATIABLE
SIMIAN SETS
OUT ALONE
INTO THE
WILDERNESS,
HACKING HIS
WAY THRU
THE DENSE
VEGETATION...

WHAT AH
WOULDN'T GIVE FOAH
A **BOMBASTO-BURGER**
RIGHT NOW!

AN' A
PEPSI!

AN' SOME
CHEEZ-ITS!

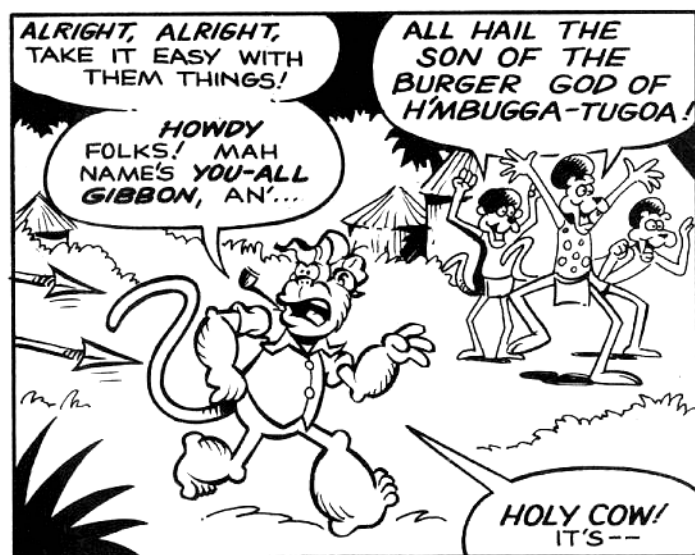
AN' MEBBE
A COUPLE O'
PEANUT BUTTER
CUPS...

WAL, NOW... WHAT'S THIS?
LOOKS LIKE SOMEONE
DROPPED HIS **WATCH...**

YEP... AN' IT'S BEEN
ENGRAVED TO...

HEY!

QUICKSAND! OKAY,
YOU-ALL, DON'T PANIC!
WHAT DO YOAHH WILEY
ANIMAL **INSTINCTS** TELL
YOU TO DO?

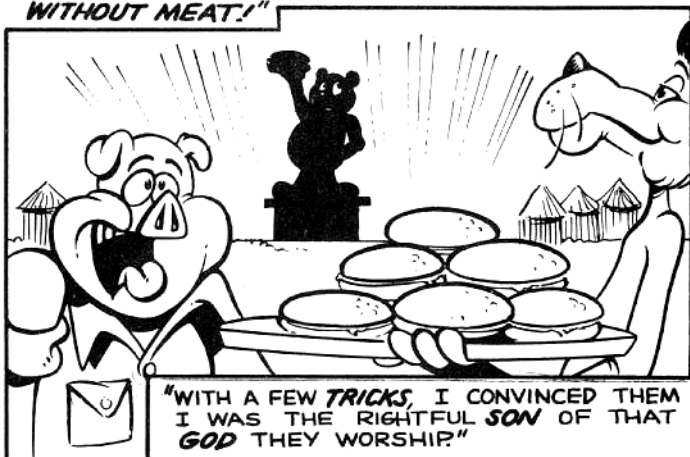




"JUST SHUT UP AND LISTEN, GIBBON. I'D HEARD RUMORS OF A LOST TRIBE WITH AN EXOTIC RECIPE FOR HAMBURGERS. I CAME HERE TO INVESTIGATE..."



"BY SHEER LUCK, I STUMBLED UPON THIS... THE LOST VILLAGE OF H'MBUGGA-TUGOA! THEY'VE GOT THE MOST FABULOUS HAMBURGERS I'D EVER TASTED! AND THEY MADE THEM WITHOUT MEAT!"



"WITH A FEW TRICKS, I CONVINCED THEM I WAS THE RIGHTFUL SON OF THAT GOD THEY WORSHIP!"

SO... I'LL GET THEIR RECIPE, AN' MACK'S BIG-BOY-IN-THE-BOX SAVES MILLIONS IN MEAT COSTS!

AH ADMIRE YOAHO GOAL...



... BUT AH CAIN'T AGREE WITH YOAHO MOTIVE AND METHOD! EXCUSE ME...

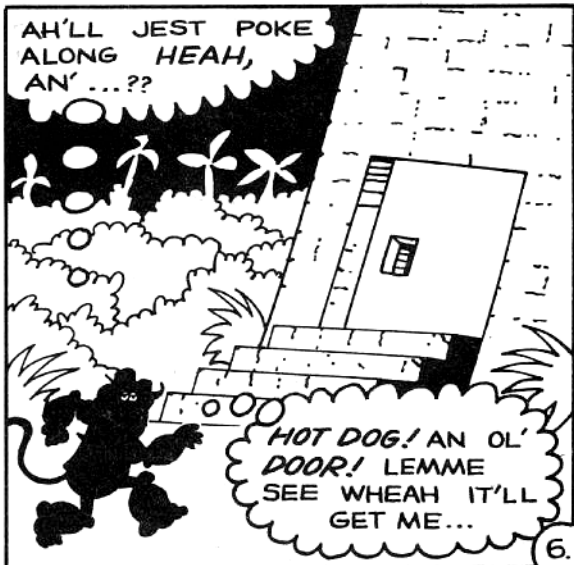
HEY! STOP HIM!

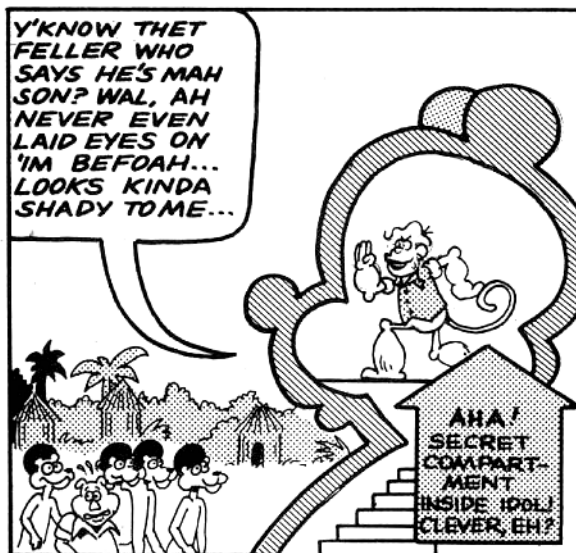


THAT NIGHT...



AH'LL JEST POKE ALONG HEAH, AN' ...??





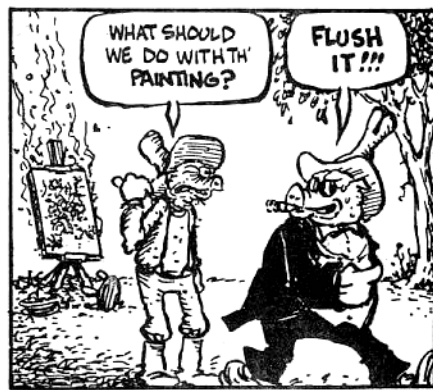
... THANKS TO THE HUBNER ROAD IRREGULARS FOR THE BRAINSTORMING!

E.Z. WOLF

"SMOKEY MOUNTAIN HIGH"



E. Z. WOLF By Ted Richards



ON THE SKIDS

CHAPTER ONE:

THE *Stratton* OR SLATTERNRY WILL GET YOU NOWHERE.

NO I'VE GOT ONE

IF IT'S KN NOT TOLU

QUIANA

SO ROBERT E. LEE SAYS--

NO PROBLEM

JOHNNY CARSON LAST NIGHT

"ONCE IS NOT ENOUGH"

SLOW SOUTHERN SCREW

FAGS

LEAVE ME ALONE!

"SUH ...

STOP--GO AWAY--

BRENDA SHOULD HAVE HER OWN SERIES

DOWN FOR PEANUTS

WATCH YOUR LANGUAGE, FUCK-HEAD

FRIZZIES

"HAVE YOU SEEN MY REGIMENT?"

PLEASE DIE!

WHO'S CARL JUNG

POOR TOTIE FIELDS

SHE'S DEAD

THESE KIDS

BEN WELDON

GERALDO RIVERA

5 MILLION

PEOPLE MAGAZINE

CO-CREATOR AND WRITER

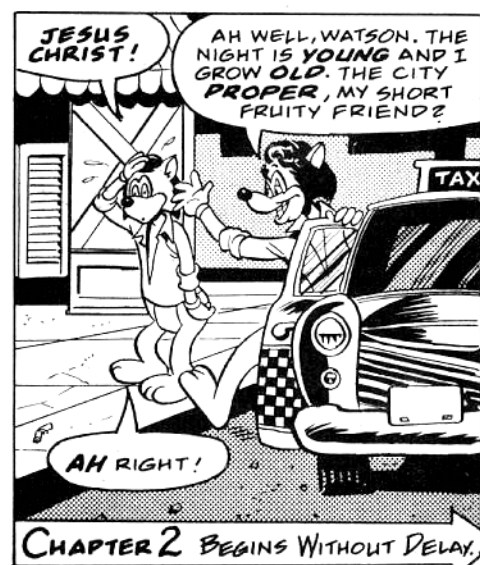
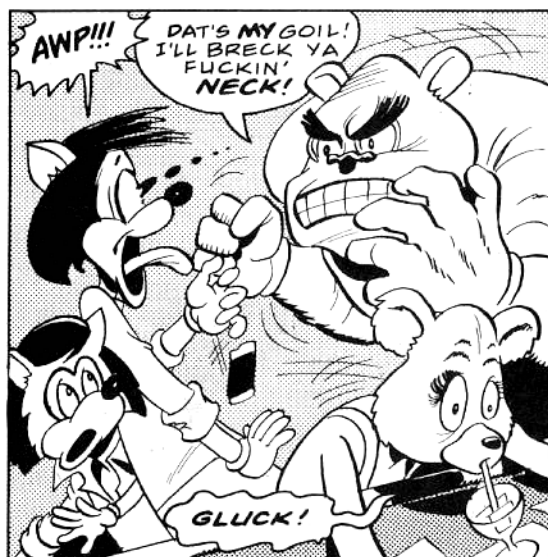
HOWARD CHAYKIN

ARTIST AND LETTERER

ALAN KUPPERBERG





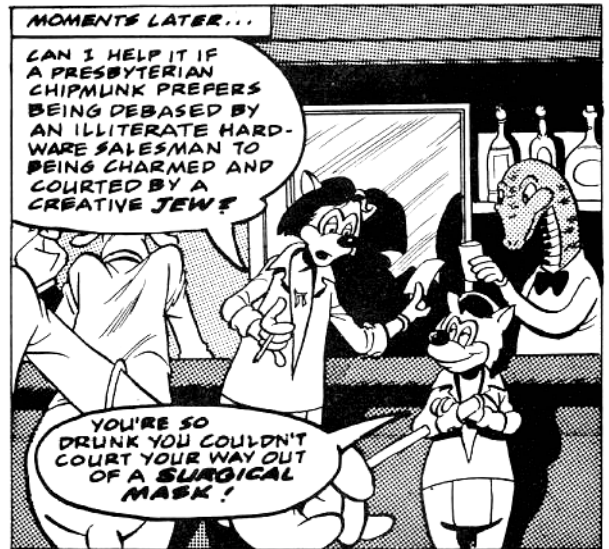


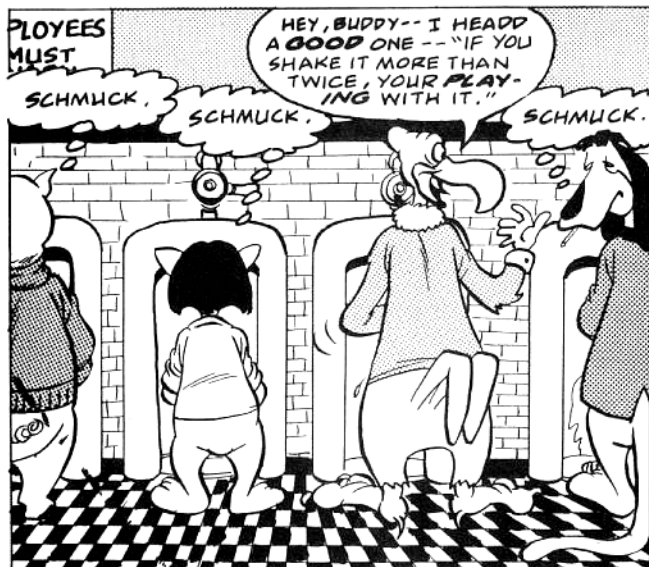
PART
2

MAXWELLS OR:

"CARL JUNG?"



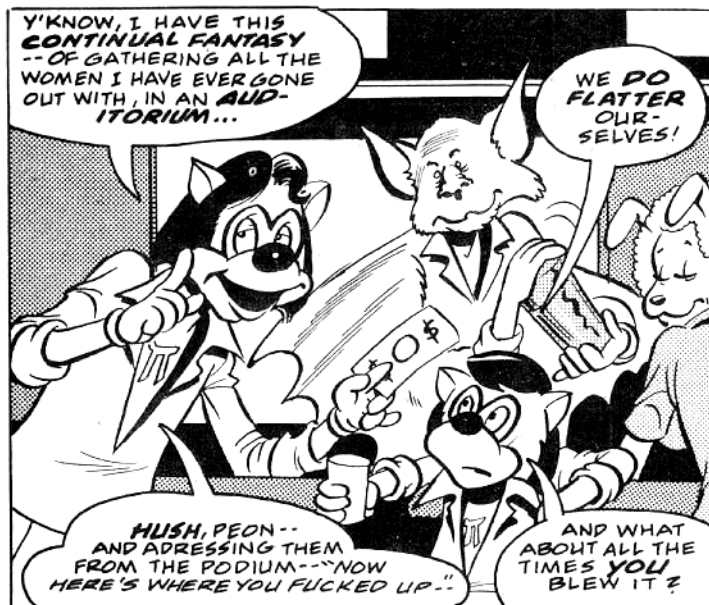


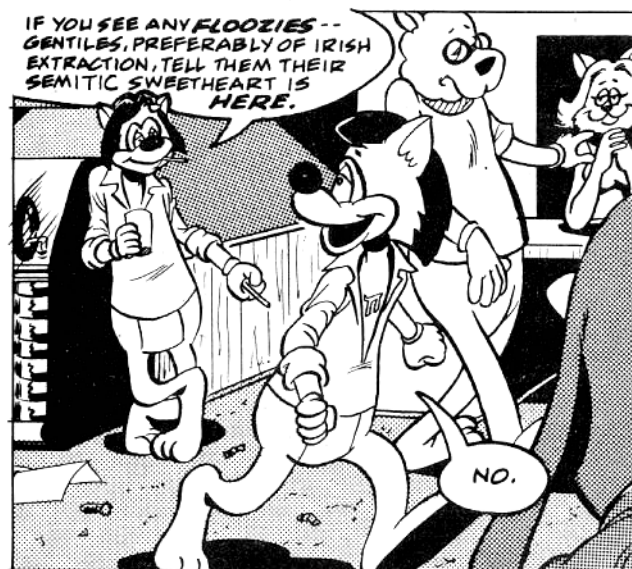
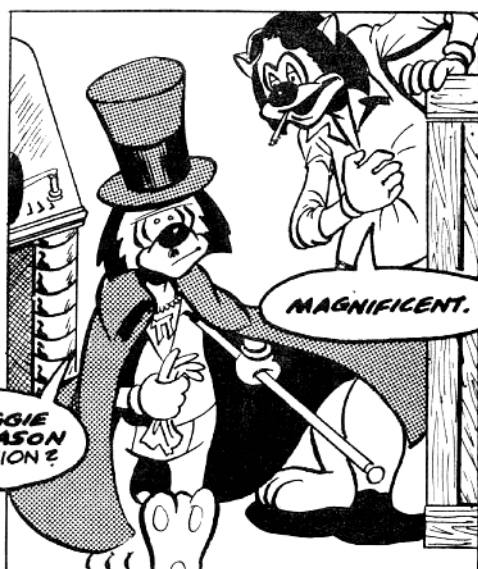


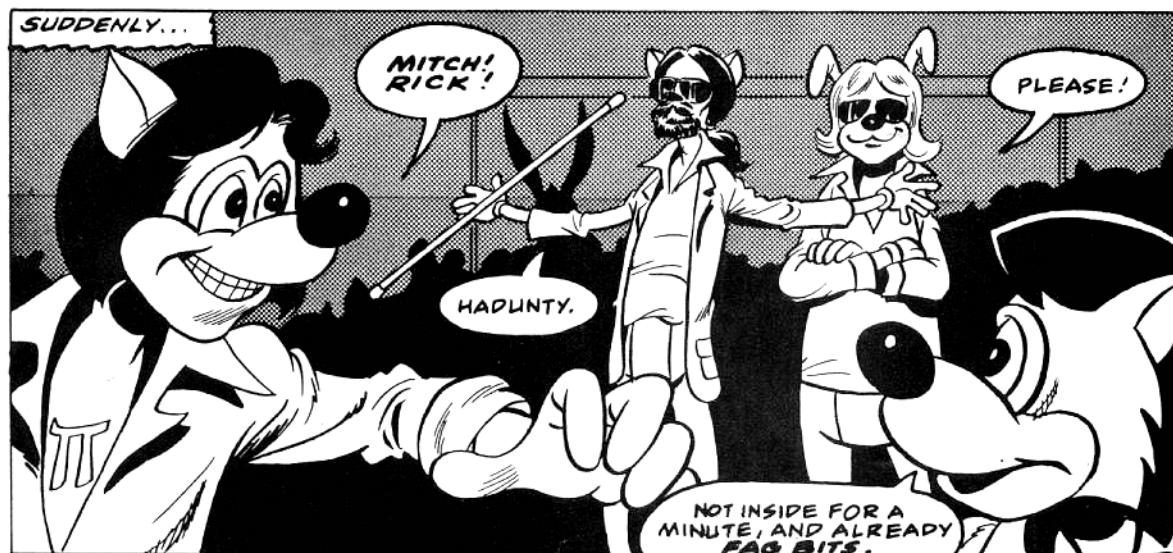
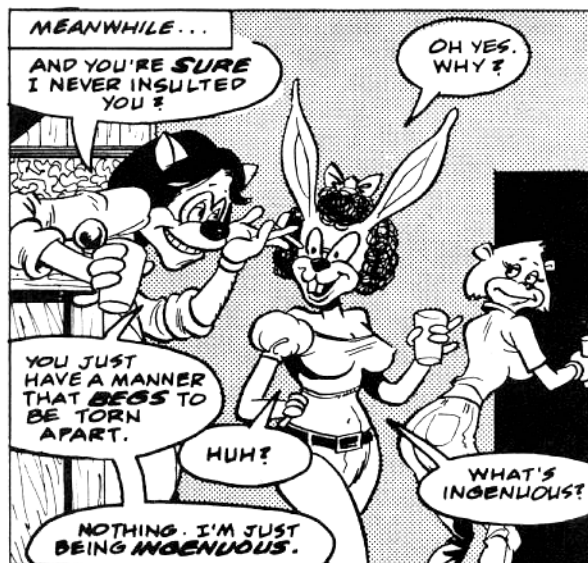
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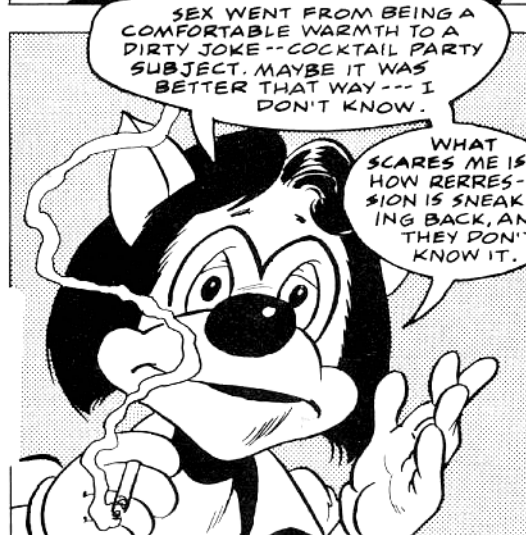
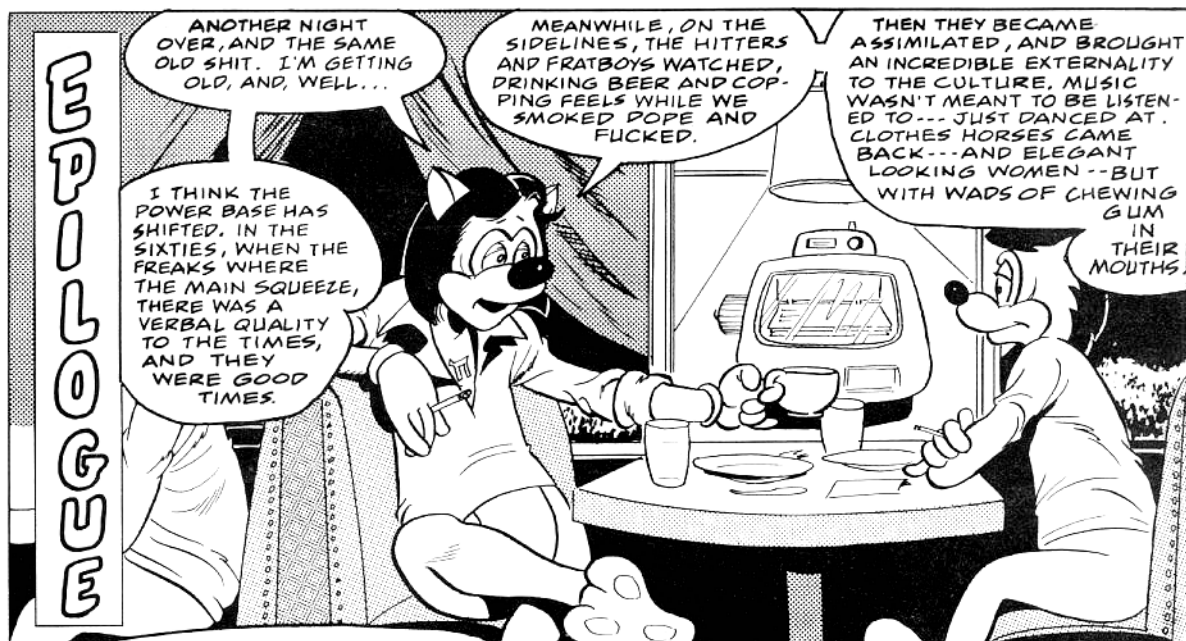
OWES

"THE OBJECT
OR: OF MY AFFECTION
WILL ALTER MY
PERCEPTION."







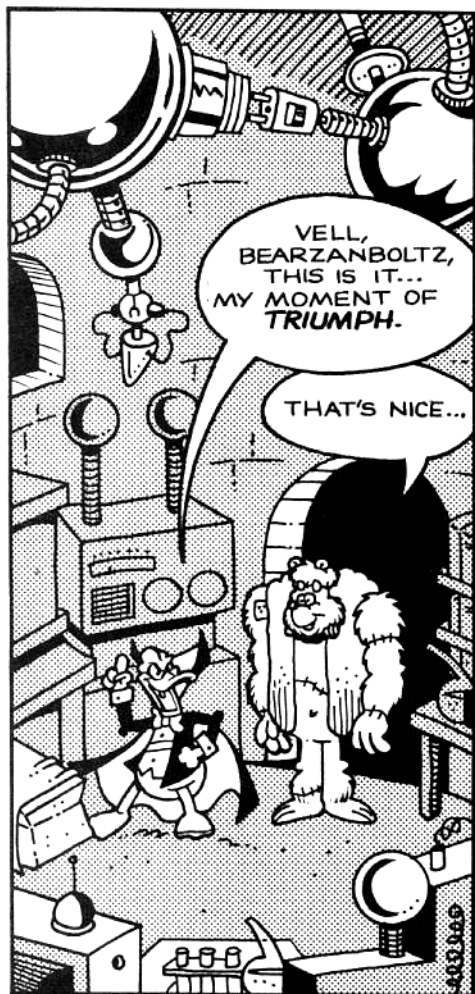


DUCKULA

...AND HIS HAIRY HENCHMAN, BEARZANBOLTZ



STORY AND
ART © 1976 BY
SCOTT SHAW!
LETTERING BY
BUD GUTZ • LOGO
BY JAN TONNESEN



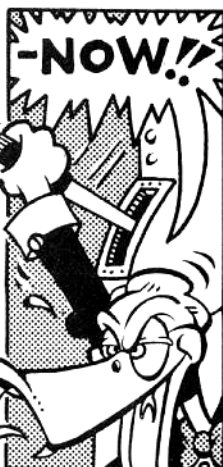
VELL,
BEARZANBOLTZ,
THIS IS IT...
MY MOMENT OF
TRIUMPH.

THAT'S NICE...

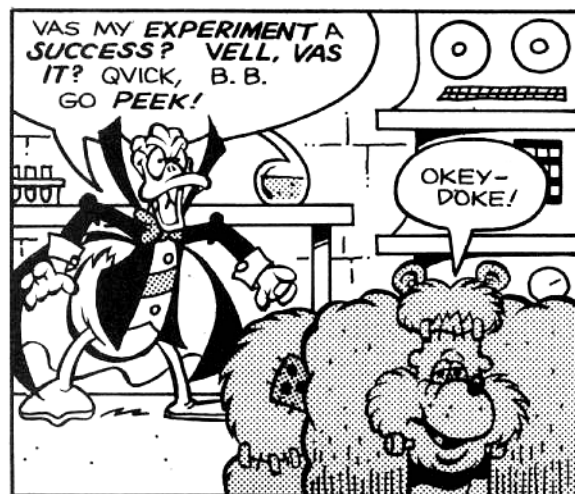
MY FRAND, YOU WERE SPAWNED BY A
FREAK EXPLOSION IN A TOY FACTORY! BUT
I, DUCKULA, THRU THE MANIPULATION OF
COLDLY LOGICAL SCIENCE, SHALL RE-CREATE
LIFE WHEN I PULL THIS SWITCH...



YEAH?



-NOW!!



VAS MY EXPERIMENT A
SUCCESS? VELL, VAS
IT? QUICK, B.B.
GO PEEK!

OKEY-
DOKE!



YUP, IT WORKED
ALL RIGHT! YOU RE-
CREATED LIFE...

...AN'
YOU GOT TWO
COLLIER'S
AN' A
SATURDAY
EVENING
POST, TO
BOOT!

EVAK!!

THE END.

KOSMO CAT



in 'THE CASE OF THE
PURLOINED
PERIODICALS'

MONEY NEVER CAUSES CRIME. IT'S WHAT YOU CAN **BUY** WITH MONEY THAT CREATES THE PROBLEM. SOME FOLKS JUST WANT THE SIMPLE PLEASURES A HOME, A JET CAR, ENOUGH FOOD MODULES ... BUT OTHERS WANT LUXURIES -- THINGS LIKE RARE ANTIQUES. AND IF THEY DON'T HAVE MONEY, THEY EITHER HAVE TO DO WITHOUT OR STEAL. WHEN THEY DO THE LATTER, THAT'S WHEN **I** GET CALLED IN. WHAT A CRUMMY WAY TO MEET PEOPLE...



MARK EVANIER, story * **SCOTT SHAW**, layout & character design
* **DAVE STEVENS**, pencils & inks * **BUD GUTZ**, lettering

JUST LIKE THIS IT STARTED:
IF THE MERCHANT HADN'T
FORGOTTEN HIS PARCEL, HE'D
NEVER HAVE RETURNED AFTER
HOURS...



ALVIE! YOU HEAR
SOMETHING OUTSIDE?
SOME NOISE?

SHUT UP! HOW
D'YA EXPECT ME TO
HEAR ANYTHING
WITH YOU
TALKIN'?



...YOU WALK RIGHT BY
IT, STUPID!



COME ON, COME ON--THAT
ILLUMINATOR PANEL'S
RIGHT AROUND HERE!
IT'S **GOTTA** BE...



NO! DON'T! PLEASE,
I HAVE A WIFE AND--



HERE IT IS--RIGHT BY
THE DOOR! LET'S
GET OUT OF
HERE!

THE SOONER
THE BETTER!



JUST LIKE THIS, IT
ENDED. WALDO SPANIEL,
LOCAL ANTIQUE DEALER,
EVAPORATED AT AGE
44...

FOR ME, IT BEGAN THE NEXT MORNING. THE NAME'S **CAT**--FIRST NAME, **KOSMO**--OCCUPATION, PRIVATE EYE. WHEN THE PHONE STARTED DOING CONNIPION FITS, I KNEW SOMETHING WAS UP...



ALL RIGHT
ALREADY! I
HEAR YOU!

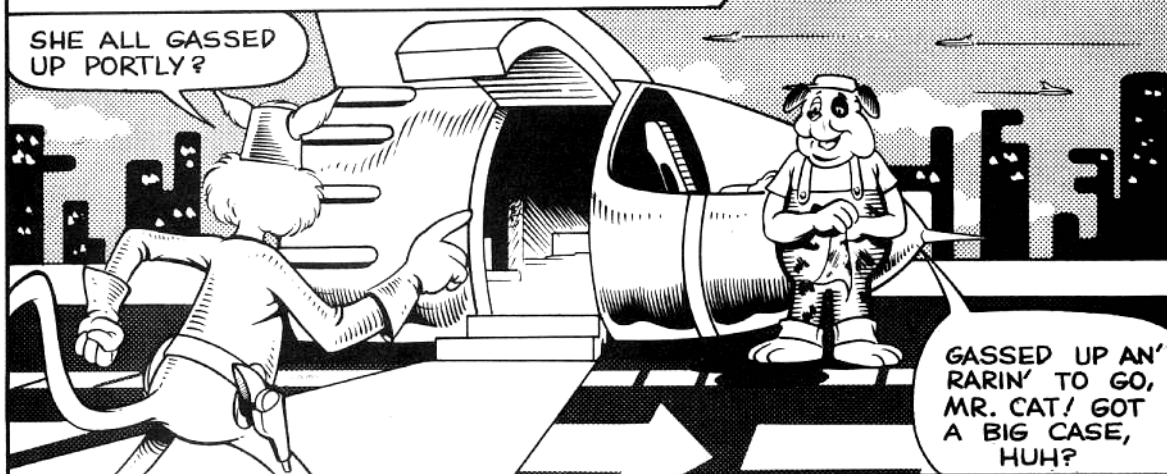
IT WAS INTERWORLD INSURANCE. I COULD GUESS WHAT **THEY** WANTED. NOTHING THEY LIKE LESS THAN PAYING OFF A POLICY...



BE RIGHT
THERE
HOUNDSTOOTH/
YOU KNOW YOU
CAN ALWAYS
COUNT ON ME!

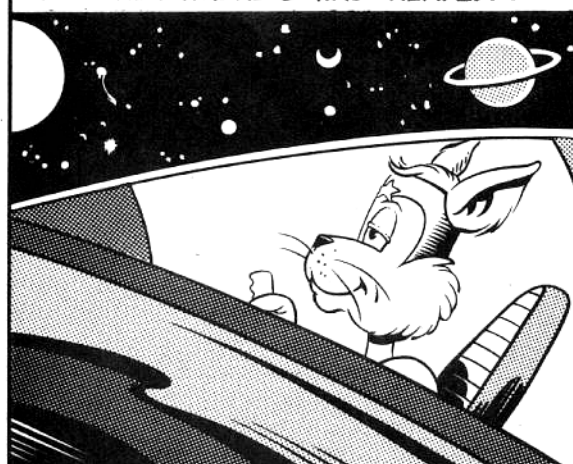
HOUNDSTOOTH HAD THAT OLD 'WE GOT TROUBLE' RESONANCE IN HIS VOICE. BAD FOR HIM, BUT GOOD FOR MY WALLET...

SHE ALL GASSED
UP PORTLY?

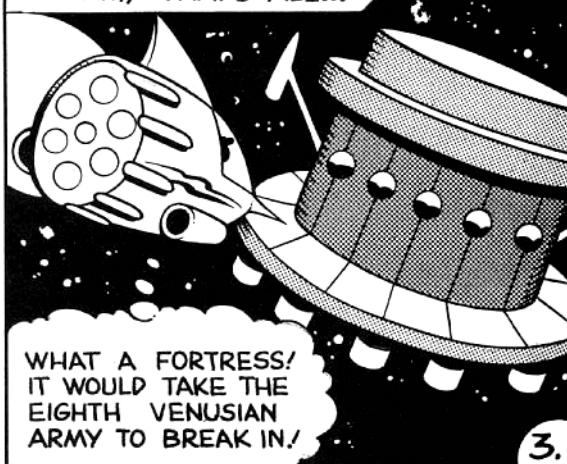


GASSED UP AN'
RARIN' TO GO,
MR. CAT! GOT
A BIG CASE,
HUH?

POOR PORTLY. WANTED TO BE A GUMSHOE SO BAD... I DIDN'T HAVE THE HEART TO TELL HIM WHERE I WAS HEADED...

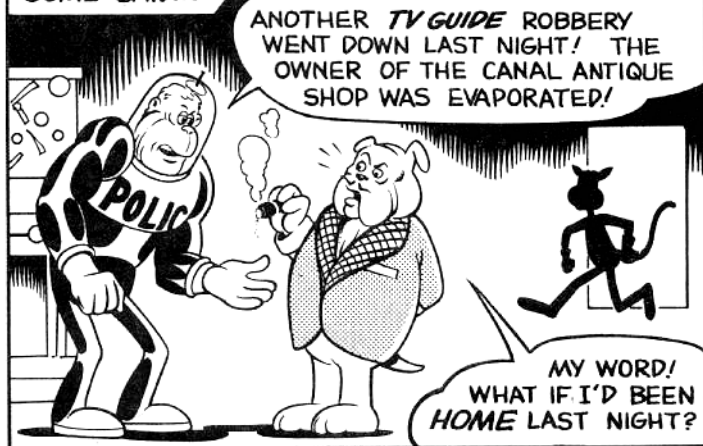


GREGORY VANDERGELT WAS **ONLY** ONE OF THE FIVE RICHEST FOLKS IN THE GALAXY, THAT'S ALL...



WHAT A FORTRESS!
IT WOULD TAKE THE
EIGHTH VENUSIAN
ARMY TO BREAK IN!

VANDERGELT HAD A SNAZZY HOME, I HAD TO ADMIT IT-- THE BEST COLLECTION OF 20TH CENTURY MEMORABILIA, THIS SIDE OF ALPHA CENTAURI, SOME SAID...

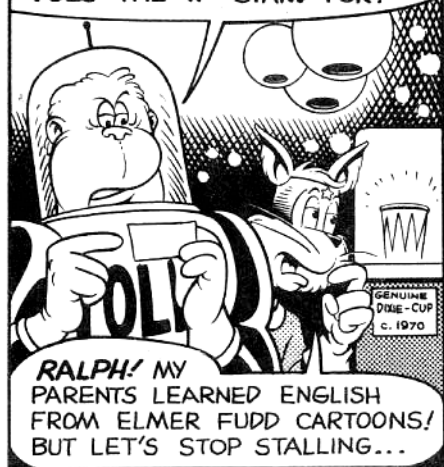


DID YOU KNOW MY TV GUIDE WAS ON DISPLAY FOR **TWELVE YEARS** UNDER FULL SECURITY AT THE LOUVRE II IN NEW PARIS?



PARDON ME-- MR. HOUNDSTOOTH OVER AT INTERWORLD INSURANCE WANTS ME TO HAVE A LOOK-SEE AROUND!

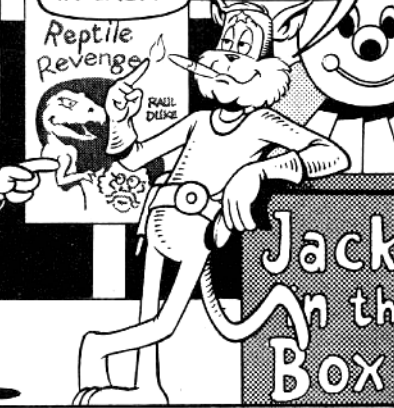
CAT, KOSMO W. PERSONAL INVESTIGATIONS! HEY, WHAT DOES THE 'W' STAND FOR?



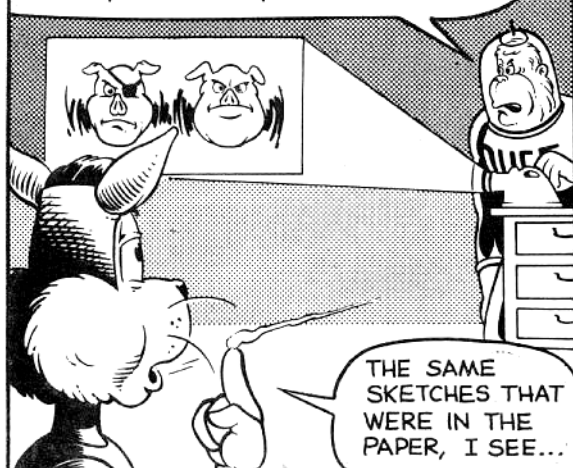
THAT'S WHY YOU'RE HERE, ISN'T IT? TO STALL MY INSURANCE REBATE?



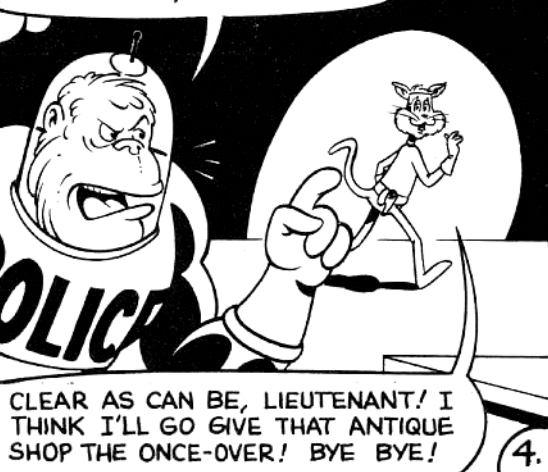
IT'S NOT AS IF YOU NEED THE CASH, MR. VANDERGELT! IT'S COMMON KNOWLEDGE YOU'RE UP TO YOUR ASTEROID IN CASH!



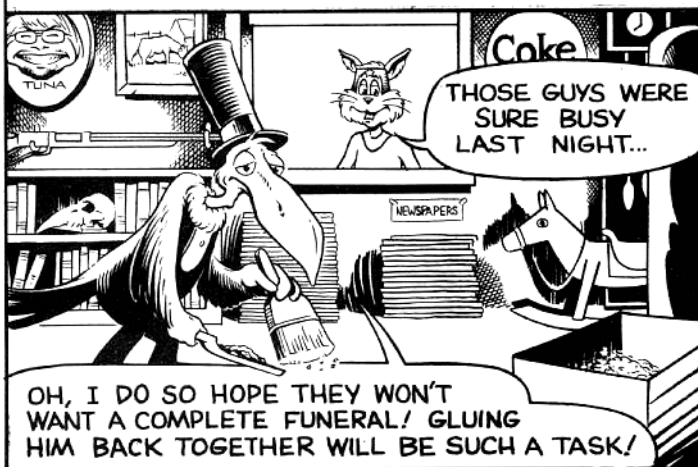
THESE ARE OUR SUSPECTS, CAT! MR. VANDERGELT SAYS HE SAW THEM LURKING AROUND, LAST NIGHT, BEFORE HE LEFT!



AND LET ME WARN YOU, CAT-- THIS IS AN OPEN POLICE INVESTIGATION! THAT MEANS NO MEDDLING, UNDERSTAND?



WHEN I GOT TO THE CANAL ANTIQUE SHOP, THE MORTICIAN WAS JUST TAKING AWAY WHAT WAS LEFT OF THE OWNER. ASHES TO ASHES...



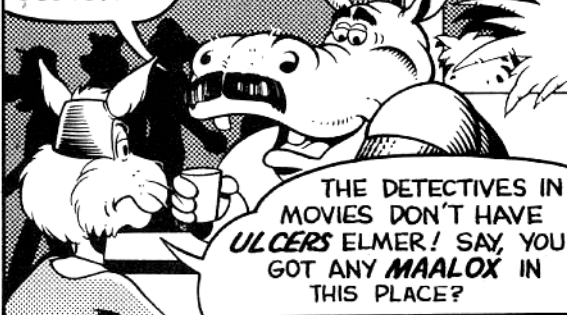
OH, I DO SO HOPE THEY WON'T WANT A COMPLETE FUNERAL! GLUING HIM BACK TOGETHER WILL BE SUCH A TASK!

...BUT THEN, THEY'VE BEEN BUSY FOR THE LAST FEW WEEKS--TEN *TV GUIDE* RIP-OFFS IN EIGHTEEN DAYS!



I CASED THE PLACE BUT GOOD. THEN, I FIGURED, I OUGHT TO GO CASE THE ORION BAR AND GRILL (COULDN'T HURT TO LOOK)...

AW, COME ON, KOSMO-- *MILK*? THE DETECTIVES IN MOVIES DRINK STRAIGHT SCOTCH!



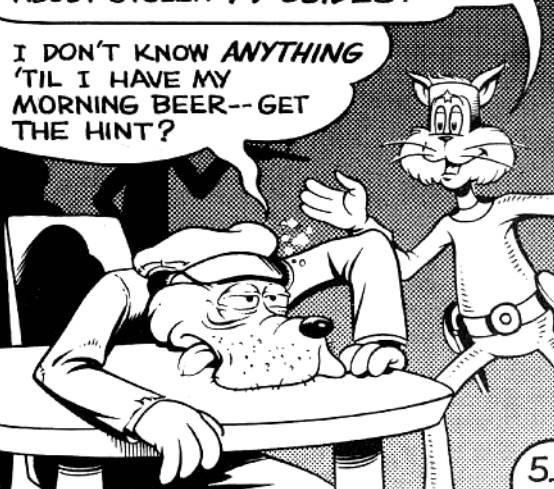
ELMER, YOU KNOW HOW THE COPS SOLVE EIGHTY PERCENT OF THEIR CASES? *TIP-OFFS*! SOME SCHMUCK CALLS UP AND TELLS THEM WHO-DUNNIT!



HI, KOSMO! BUY ME A DRINK? CHAMPAGNE COCKTAIL?



MORNING, LUBETZSKY! YOU KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT STOLEN *TV GUIDES*?



IF THERE'S ONE THING YOU LEARN IN THIS BUSINESS, IT'S TO TAKE SUBTLE HINTS. LUBETZSKY WAS AS SUBTLE AS A PREGNANT PLUTONIAN SNOWMAN...

OKAY, *HERE!* NOW, WHAT DO YOU KNOW?

I KNOW *LOTS* STUFF! THE CAPITAL OF OREGON IS SALEM... THE CAPITAL OF SATURN IS RELBOIN... THE CAPITAL OF VIRGINIA...

YEAH, I KNOW-- RICHMOND!

CRIME IN THE STREETS AND HE'S GIVING ME A GEOGRAPHY LESSON!

I WAS GETTING NOWHERE, BUT AT LEAST I WAS GETTING THERE *FAST!* I NEEDED MORE INFO ON VINTAGE TV GUIDES... THAT MEANT A TRIP TO SEE MAURY...

MAURY RAN THE BIGGEST ANTIQUE SHOP IN THE SOLAR SHIFT. IF HE DIDN'T KNOW, NO POINT ASKING ANYONE ELSE...

... A REAL BUY, KOSMO-- HOWARD THE HUMAN, NUMBER ONE, ONLY THIRTY CENTS! ANY OTHER COMIC FROM 1975 GOES FOR A HUNDRED TIMES THAT!

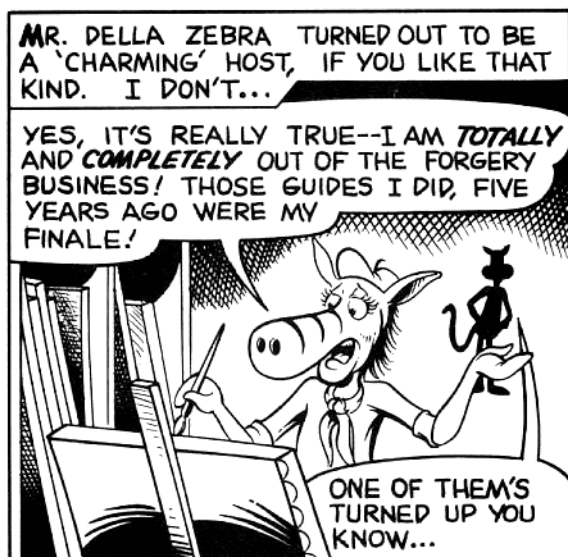
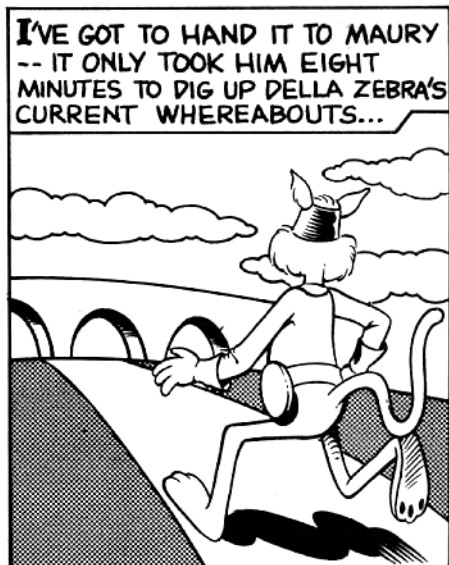
NO WAY, MAURY-- I KNOW YOU'VE GOT A THOUSAND OF THOSE STASHED AWAY! EVERY DEALER DOES!

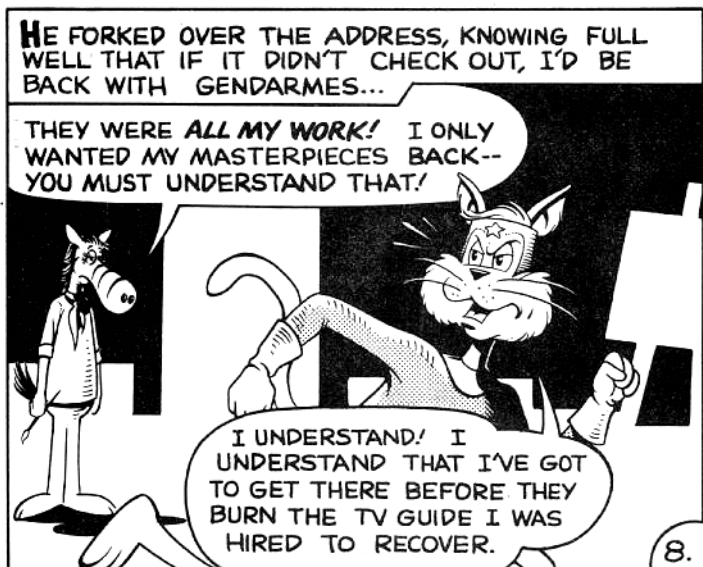
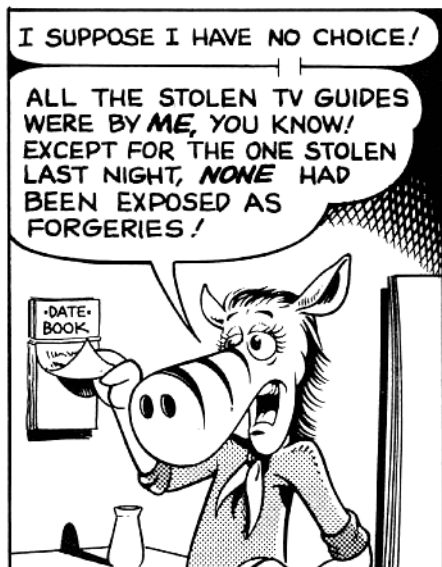
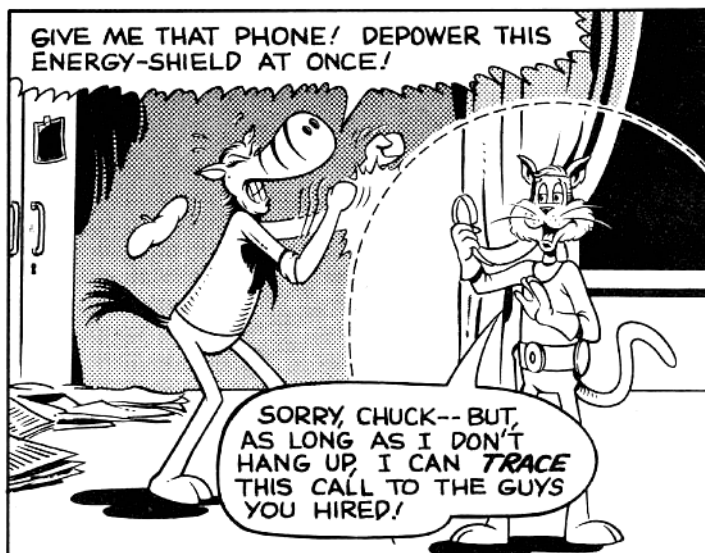
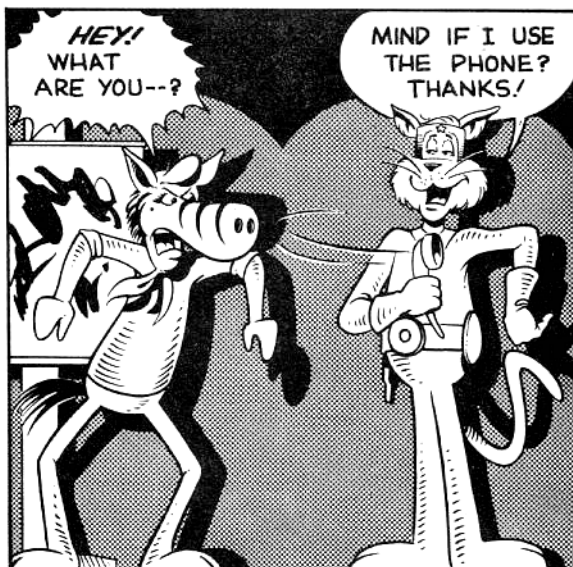
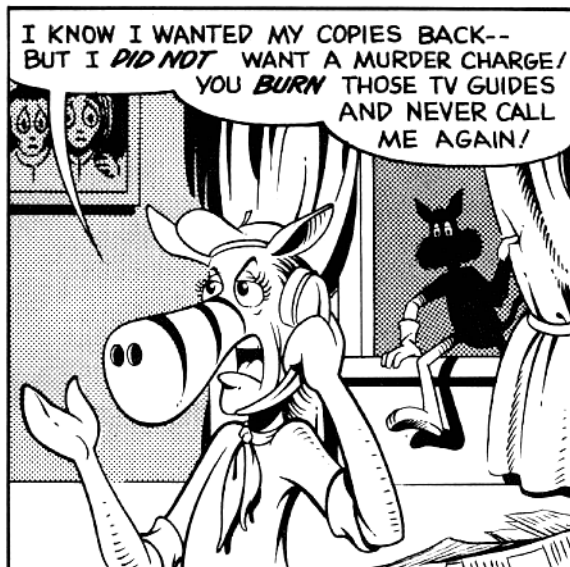
OKAY-- YOU WANT TO KNOW ABOUT THE STOLEN TV GUIDES, RIGHT? HERE'S WHAT I KNOW...

THE ONE STOLEN FROM THE CANAL SHOP WAS A *FAKE*-- A COUNTERFEIT JOB RIGGED UP BY CHARLES DELLA ZEBRA!

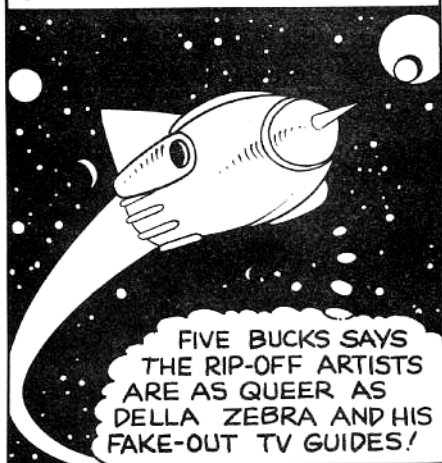
DELLA ZEBRA? THE FAMOUS FORGER?

YOU GOT IT! FIVE YEARS AGO, HE KNOCKED OFF A BATCH-- SOLD THEM FOR A *FORTUNE*-- BUT HE GOT CAUGHT... SPENT A YEAR IN JAIL!





I HAD IT IN *FULL-WARP* ALL THE WAY. BUT I WASN'T SURE THAT WAS FAST ENOUGH..

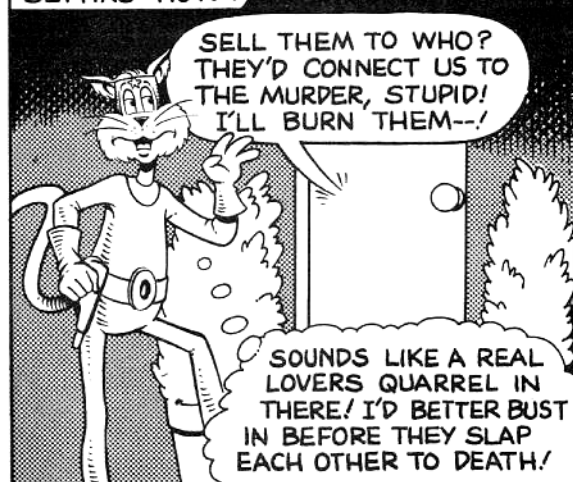


THINGS WERE FAR FROM PEACEFUL AT THE DOPPLER ARMS

YOU *HAD* TO KILL THAT GUY AT THE SHOP! NOW DELLA ZEBRA WON'T HAVE A THING TO DO WITH US! WHO'S GONNA TAKE CARE OF US?



I GOT THERE JUST AS THINGS WERE GETTING HOT...



HOWDY, GUYS! I'M SELLING CANDY TO WORK MY WAY THROUGH DENTAL SCHOOL. WANT TO BUY SOME?



WE'LL DESTROY THE TV GUIDES! THAT'S THE ONLY EVIDENCE AGAINST US!



YOU'RE NOT TAKING *US* IN!

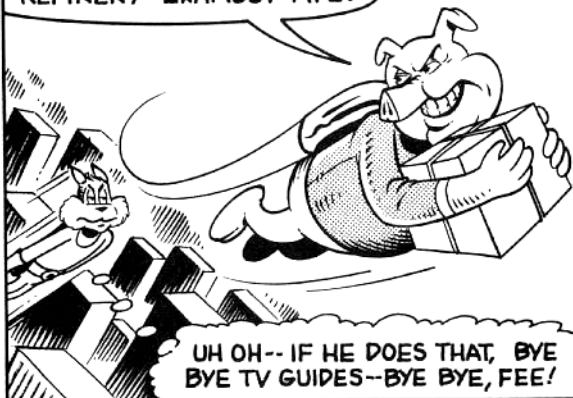
SURE LOOKS THAT WAY AT THE MOMENT...



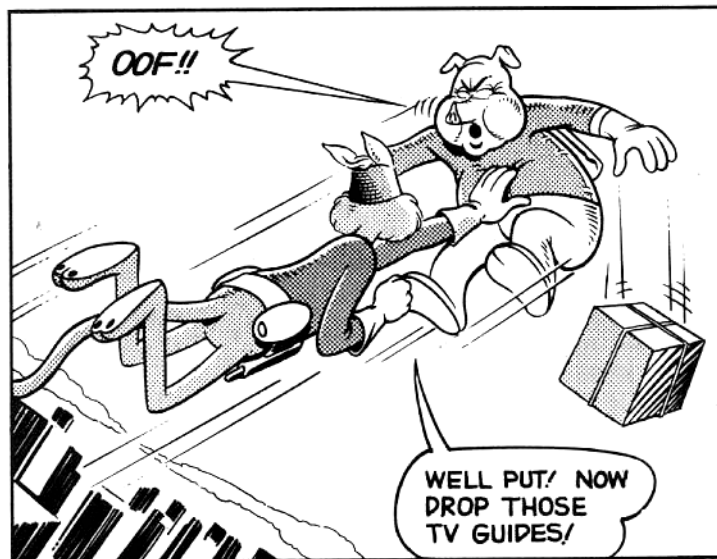


THE SCORE WAS ONE DOWN, ONE TO GO. THE TROUBLE WAS-- THAT ONE WAS GOING ... WITH THE TV GUIDES...

I'LL DUMP THEM IN THE REFINERY EXHAUST PIPE!



UH OH-- IF HE DOES THAT, BYE BYE TV GUIDES--BYE BYE, FEE!

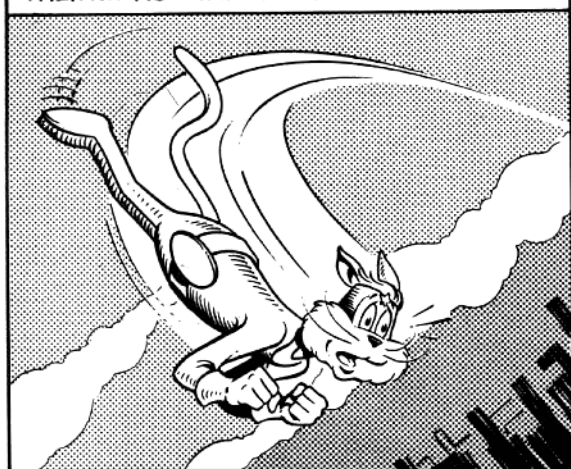


WELL PUT! NOW DROP THOSE TV GUIDES!

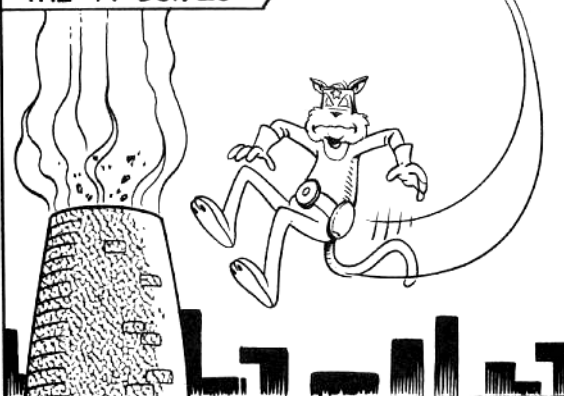


TOO LATE! THERE THEY GO--TOWARDS THE EXHAUST PIPE!

GALILEO COULD HAVE TOLD YOU-- THERE WAS NO WAY I COULD HAVE CAUGHT THEM... NO WAY IN THE WORLD...

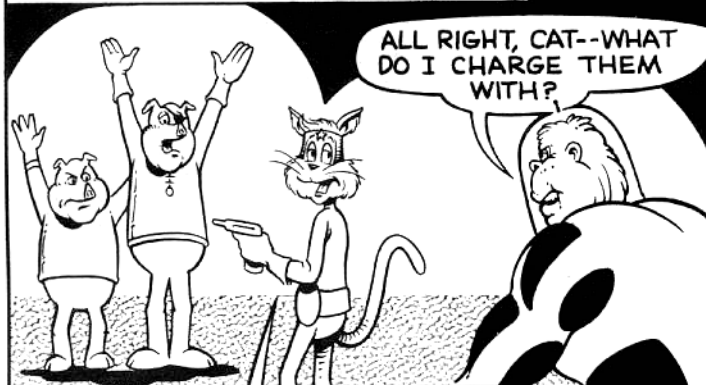


DAMN THAT GALILEO. SO MUCH FOR THE TV GUIDES...



THERE WAS NOTHING LEFT TO DO BUT CALL THE COPS TO COME PICK UP MY TWO PLAYMATES...

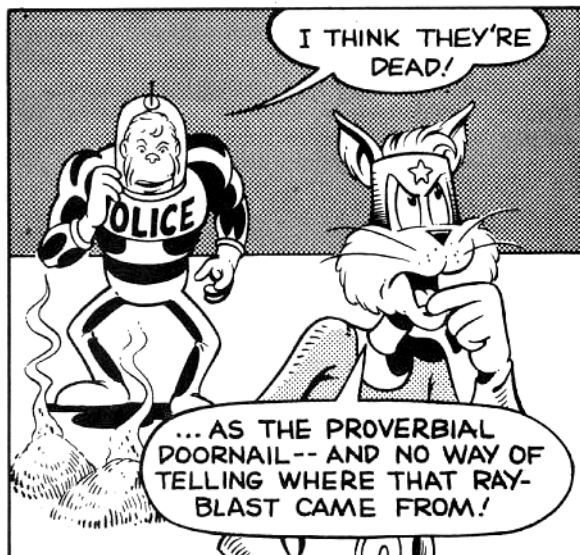
THE COPS TOOK THEIR OWN SWEET TIME ABOUT SHOWING UP. THEY USUALLY DO...



ALL RIGHT, CAT--WHAT DO I CHARGE THEM WITH?

YOU'LL THINK OF SOMETHING! JUST GRILL THEM--THE OLD THIRD DEGREE OUGHT TO OPEN THEM UP...

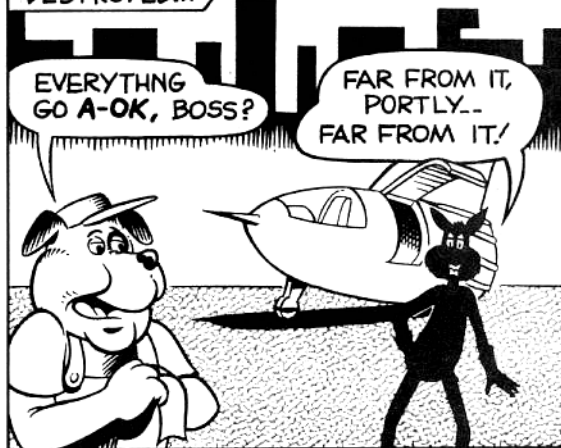
BUT THERE WASN'T GOING TO BE ANY THIRD DEGREE. JUST THEN...



I THINK THEY'RE DEAD!

...AS THE PROVERBIAL DOORNAIL-- AND NO WAY OF TELLING WHERE THAT RAY-BLAST CAME FROM!

THIS WAS WHAT YOU CALL YOUR BASIC BOMB-OUT: CROOKS DEAD, PLUS THE THING I WAS SUPPOSED TO RECOVER, DESTROYED...



EVERYTHING GO A-OK, BOSS?

FAR FROM IT, PORTLY... FAR FROM IT!

FIRST ONE YOU'VE BLOWN IN ALL THE TIME YOU'VE BEEN IN THE BUSINESS--WHAT IS IT? TWELVE YEARS?

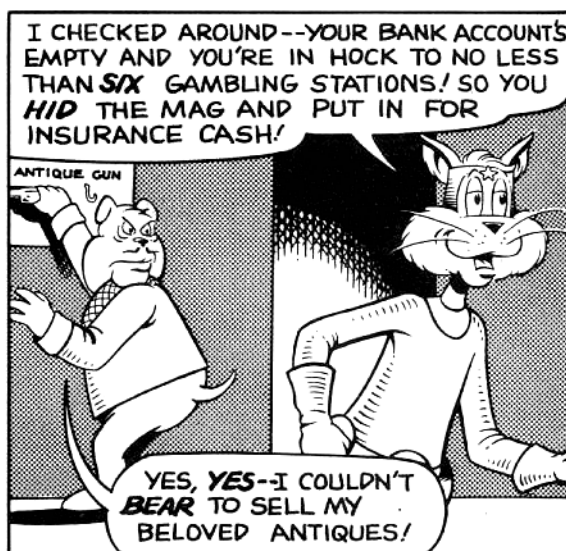
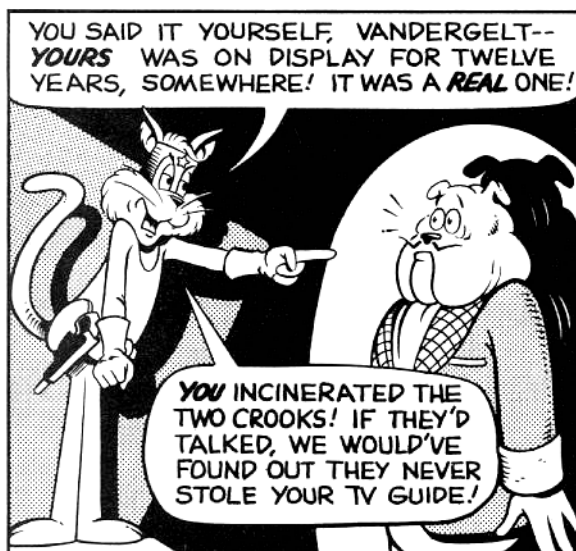
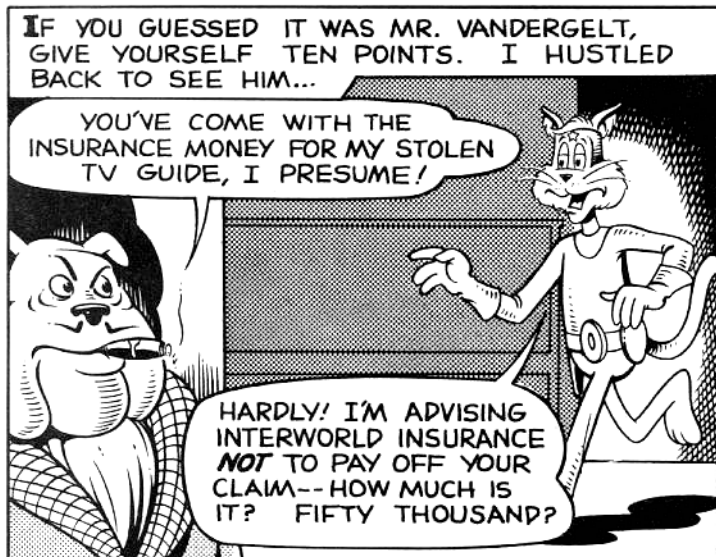


YES, TWELVE YEARS-- I HAD TO LOSE ONE, SOONER OR...

HOLD EVERYTHING! ALL MAY NOT BE LOST, PORTLY! I'LL BET I KNOW WHO KILLED THOSE TWO GUYS-- AND **WHY!**



OKAY, READER--YOUR TURN! MATCH MINDS WITH THIS SPACE-AGE ELLERY QUEEN. YOU HAVE ALL THE CLUES YOU NEED-- IF YOU KNOW HOW TO PUT THEM TOGETHER...



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